

EDITOR'S NOTE

Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy (SIBA) is honored to issue Volume VI of its annual peer reviewed academic journal, the Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies (SIJBS) in 2020 to commemorate the outstanding scholarly accomplishments of Emeritus Professor P.D. Premasiri. This issue of the SIJBS consists of a variety of timely articles in the fields of Buddhist and Religious Studies.

One of our esteemed contributors, Assistant Professor Arvind Kumar Singh (PhD) Assistant Professor, School of Buddhist Studies and Civilization, Director, International Affairs, Gautam Buddha University in India writes on a topic of great importance in contemporary society, that of drug addiction and the Buddhist response to such addiction. The problem is a plague on modern societies but is certainly not new, and as the abuse of alcohol and other intoxicants was a problem in the time of the Buddha. The article illustrates the Buddhist attitudes towards intoxicants in the *Nikāyas* and the solutions offered to people within the context of Buddhist lay practice.

The SIJBS editor-in-chief, Iromi Ariyaratne (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Department of Buddhist Culture, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka has contributed an article which illumines the history of Sino-Sri Lankan relations through examining the reverence for the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha which has been shared by China and Sri Lanka for many centuries. This has given impetus to an ongoing friendly relationship between China and Sri Lanka dating back to the time of the Sinhalese King Devānampiyatissa and the Sung Dynasty of China, which saw the visit of the Chinese Buddhist monk Faxian to the Kingdom of Lanka.

M.Z.M. Nafeel (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Department of Arabic and Islamic Civilization, at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, has contributed an important article which gives hope for the furthering of friendly relationships between Muslims and Buddhists. As always, friendly relationships are based on mutual understanding and respect and Dr. Nafeel delves into the history of the Islamic Califate to show how many Muslim rulers allowed the flourishing of Buddhist monasticism within their realms and that their religious culture was admired. Building on this historical theme, Dr. Nafeel shows how many of the qualities promoted by the Buddha and his disciples are in harmony with the holy life promoted in the Holy Quran and other Muslim writings. He demonstrates that there has been a fruitful dialogue between Islam and Buddhism for more than thirteen centuries, and that the relationships between the Muslim and Buddhist communities can continue and be further developed in that positive mode.

S. Vijitha Kumara (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, has contributed an article on the exegetical methods in the sub-commentaries of the *Majjhimanikāya*. Dr. Vijitha reveals that the well-known methods of exegesis as studied in relation to the *Dighanikāya* are not sufficient to an understanding of the approach of the sub-commentaries to

the *Majjhimanikāya*. He reveals hidden methods of exegesis that are necessary to a full understanding of this literature and how it interprets the *Majjhima*.

The article written by Pusselle Vineetha (MEd in TESL), Temporary Lecturer in English, Department of Languages, Nagananda International Institutes for Buddhist Studies, Sri Lanka points out the importance that the English language has assumed in the education of monks in the setting of Sri Lankan monastic education. The author points out that this reflects international trends as well as the importance of English as a link language in multi-ethnic Sri Lanka. Acquisition of English skills can be readily put to use by Buddhist monks to carry on missionary activities as well as a variety of other important functions discussed by the author. The article recommends changes in the system of teaching English in the monastic setting to give the learners greater success.

Wadinagala Pannaloka (PhD), Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Buddhist Thought, Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, discusses whether Buddhism can be considered as a form of empiricism by comparing the teachings of the Buddha with salient features of the empiricism of English philosopher John Locke. He takes on this question by analyzing the respective theories of knowledge within Buddhism and in the writings of Locke.

In addition to the scholarly articles, this volume contains an introduction in commemoration of the splendid career and the service of Professor P.D. Premasiri prepared by Upali M. Sedere, (PhD, Iowa), (PhD, MCU), State Secretary, Ministry of Educational Reforms, and the Rector & CEO, SIBA, Sri Lanka, together with Venerable Deegalle Mahinda (PhD), Professor in Religions, Philosophies and Ethics, Bath Spa University, United Kingdom. Moreover, the journal includes a bibliography of Professor Premasiri's voluminous publications and related achievements, included in the journal for reference as well as to celebrate Professor Premasiri's achievements prepared by Venerable Professor Deegalle Mahinda.

Many people have contributed to this journal and without their combined efforts it would not have been possible. First, my thanks go to the advisory board of the SIJBS, namely Dr. Pradeep Nilanga Dela, Chairman, SIBA, Dr. Upali M. Sedere, and Professor P.D. Premasiri. Considering Ven. Prof. Deegalle Mahinda's honorary contribution given to this special issue of the SIJBS, the editorial board decided to acknowledge his service appointing him as a member of the advisory board for this volume.

The Rector of SIBA, Dr. Upali M. Sedere, has offered his support and wise counsel in innumerable ways. Without his kind advice and assistance, the SIJBS and indeed the academic contribution to the field of Buddhist Studies which SIBA does would not be possible. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the above-mentioned contributors who selected SIJBS to publish their valuable academic writings. Further, the editorial board decided to keep the expert reviewers of the SIJBS as blind reviewers from this time onwards. Although we cannot list their

names here, we express our heartiest gratitude for their commendable service rendered to make this volume a success.

SIBA's IT team contributed their indispensable technical assistance. We are grateful for their contributions in developing the e-journal site and uploading the journal to that site. The following are the IT team at SIBA: Mr. Dhanushka Ratnayake (Head IT Dept. SIBA), Mr. Mahesh Seneviratne, Mr. Gayan Herath, Mr. Anupama Dilshan and Mr. Rasindu Perera.

The SIJBS comes to us due to the work of dedicated administration and staff at SIBA who keep our international institution of higher learning running creatively and efficiently. The SIJBS is one of many important aspects of SIBA made possible by the entire administration and staff of whom the following deserve special mention: Mr. Jagath Kulathunga, Head Administration, SIBA, Ms. Mirani Werellagama, Head finance SIBA and the staff members of the finance department of SIBA. We are grateful for their supportive hands.

Further, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to our editorial board namely, Dr. Mark Johnson, Ms. Kaushalya Karunasagara, Ven. Viharagala Pagnaloka and Ven. Parasangaswewa Sumanatissa who were always ready to extend their supportive hands to us in this editorial work. Especially, we must mention the commitment of Dr. Mark Johnson, our language editor who took time from his busy schedule to assist us online from the USA.

On a final note, we are pleased to mention that in my capacity as Editor-in-Chief, together with our editorial board, we have decided to publish the SIJBS as two issues per volume from the year 2021 onwards to offer more opportunities for the writers of the academic field of Buddhist Studies to publish their academic work.

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